

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Please sign up for Public Comment via the CHAT tab by 9:00 a.m.

Comments left in the chat will not be acknowledged.

Written comments may be submitted to the Clerk of the Board, pcarver@bpl.org

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

Dr. Ray Liu, Chair

OPENING STATEMENT

The Trustees of The Boston Public Library reaffirm our commitment to racial equity and to the broad principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The Library is formally committed to becoming an anti-racist organization in response to systemic racism, inequity, and injustice prevalent in our society.

We acknowledge also that the Boston Public Library's Central Library stands on land that was once a water-based ecosystem providing sustenance for the indigenous Massachusetts people and is a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange among nations.

We are committed to land acknowledgements for all locations at which we operate.

We reaffirm this commitment to set the context for our planning, deliberations, and public engagement so that they take place from the spirit of welcome and respect found in our motto: "*Free to All.*"

CALL TO ORDER & REPORT

Dr. Ray Liu, Chair

- Roll call of Board
- Approval of Minutes of 1.20.26



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

David Leonard

President

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

Approved December 2025

Implementation Planning: January - June 2025

- Year 1: FY26 July 1 - June 30
- Key Organizational Principles:
 - Mission/Vision/Values
 - Roles
 - Goals
 - Initiatives
 - (Tactical/ Tasks)

STRATEGIC PLAN FY26 SUMMARY

Active Projects: 39

- Green 16
- Yellow 17
- Red 1
- Completed 5
- Not Started 0

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Lifelong Learning & Research Partner

- Winter Reading: We had 3,800 downloads of the Winter Reading log.
- Children's Room programs at Central – we averaged 916 patrons a week Jan-March

Community Engager

- Working definition of civic engagement complete

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Trusted Resource

- 12,052 new eCard registrations
- 1,747 Books Unbanned registrations

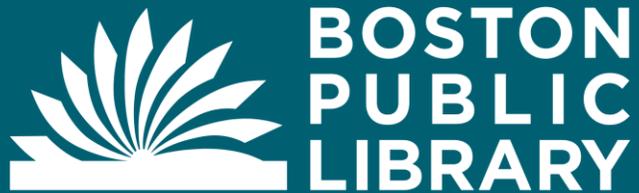
Welcoming Destination

- Development of accessibility improvements database

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Organizational Readiness

- Hired or onboarded since last meeting
 - Institutional Records Archivist
 - Cataloging Supervisor
 - Digital Preservation Manager
 - Digital Experience Manager
 - Social Worker
 - Payroll Coordinator
 - Library Assistants at Connolly, Borrower Services



Social Work Program

BPL's Community Support Team

Taylor Morris

Michael Colford

Anna Fahey-Flynn

Manager of Social Work

Director of Library Services

Manager of the Central Library

Why the BPL?

25 branches across Boston

Thousands of residents served daily

Trusted, welcoming, no-barrier access

A Natural Safety Net

 The Guardian

Why US libraries are on the frontlines of the homelessness crisis

Homelessness advocates say there is a nationwide trend of homeless people relying on public libraries as a safe haven where they can stay warm,...

WSJ WSJ

Libraries Are the New Front Line in America's Mental-Health Crisis

HUNTINGTON, W.Va.—When Michael Bare started working as a library assistant, he thought he would be helping with term papers or leading a...

 The San Francisco Standard

Books on drug addiction are the most stolen from San Francisco libraries

 CBC

Libraries like Red Deer's changing how they hire, train staff because of homelessness crisis

The national homelessness crisis is causing libraries like Red Deer's to take a new approach to how they operate.

Our Social Services Team



Social Work Manager

Taylor Morris

- Direct service
- Program oversight
- Institutional support



MSW Graduate Interns

Social work students
from Simmons, BU, and
BC

Year-long practicum at
BPL



Expanding our team

- Actively recruiting a Peer Navigator Supervisor
- 2nd social worker will join in April.



Community Partners

Connecting patrons to
care along with:

- PSI outreach
- Vital Connections
- Boston Health Care for the Homeless
- DMH Street Team
- MBRLC

What We Do

Engagement and rapport building, resource navigation, emotional support, and advocacy



Resource Navigation

Navigation & referrals connecting patrons with housing, healthcare, food, and other needs.



Engagement and Trust

Build trusting relationships with patrons, especially those facing barriers to other services. Learn their needs, strengths, and current touch points with providers



Basic Needs Support

Personal care items such as socks, hand warmers, pre-loaded T-passes, and laundry vouchers.



Collaboration and Advocacy

Strengthen service coordination to bring resources directly to library patrons.

Work with patrons to identify and reduce barriers to care.

How We Work with Patrons

Engagement and rapport building, resource navigation, emotional support, and advocacy

Drop-in hours

4x per week at Central Library

Expanding to the branches with the addition of the second social worker.

1:1 Appointments

Schedule individual appointments to meet patrons at times that work for *them*.

Phone/email

Shared email inbox and phone number for questions about accessing social services.

Coffee and Conversation Program

Weekly program on Tuesdays outside Newsfeed Café with fresh coffee, pastries, and board games.

What This Looks Like

Engagement and rapport building, resource navigation, emotional support, and advocacy

Addiction Support

"I knew if I came here you would help me"

Unemployment Claims

Successful appeal for benefits; patron no longer has to navigate legal complications

Connection to Crisis Services

Successfully linked potentially suicidal patron to a mental health crisis team for additional supports.

Victims of Crime

Assisted a victim of assault in obtaining victim compensation funds to cover medical bills; found him a legal advocate for support during court; connected him with mental health care for his trauma

Quote from Patron

"I have a room with a shared bathroom for a 6-month lease... they call it a transitional program, and I am happy! I will start Pharmacy Technician Training in April. Thank you for your time and support! I am so grateful! I would not have survived without a library. You guys helped me to save my mental health!"

Walter's Story

Having these services available to BPL patrons matters

What staff saw

A strong odor that could potentially be disruptive to others in the space

What was really happening

A lot.

"I try to sit away from everyone else. I just don't want to be out in the cold."

Where things stand

It's complicated.

What Makes This Possible

1. BPL's **strategic roles** as a trusted resource and a welcoming destination
2. **Strong partnerships** - PSI has dedicated outreach teams, housing resources, and enrollment pathways.
3. Continued collaboration and follow up

Impact by the Numbers

753

CST Social service appointments
(3 year period)

Goal: 480 — we exceeded by 57%

9,619

**Interactions with
housing-insecure patrons**
(3 year period)

Goal: 2,000 — nearly 5× the target

45

**Monthly interactions
between CST and patrons
experiencing homelessness**

358

New CST patron intakes
(3 year period)

Goal: 300 — met and surpassed

20+

**Attendees at Coffee &
Conversation (weekly)**

Consistent attendance at each
program

30

**Appointments with CST
per month**

Recent Highlights



Liberty Mutual Planning Grant

Liberty Mutual Foundation Collaborative Impact Grant — a partnership with Pine Street Inn and Vital Connections to plan how to better serve housing-insecure patrons at library locations. Phase 1 – needs assessments and plan. Phase 2 - potential for \$1.5 million in implementation funding.



T Passes for Every Branch

We secured enough pre-loaded MBTA passes so that every BPL branch now has them on hand — ensuring patrons experiencing homelessness can get to shelter when they need it most.



Laundry Voucher Program

A new partnership with a local laundromat means BPL patrons who carry all their belongings can now receive free wash-and-dry vouchers.



PSI: 21 People Housed so far in FY26

Our community partner PSI serves unhoused patrons day at night at the Copley library and have directly placed 21 people in housing so far

Beyond Patron Services

Supporting BPL staff and strengthening our institution from the inside

Staff Training

System-wide staff trainings: Mental Health First Aid, Trauma-Informed Approaches, Crisis Prevention & De-escalation, and How to Respond After a Critical Incident

Institutional Guidance

Contributed a trauma-informed lens to updating Acceptable Use Policy; work with leadership on best practices for patrons with complex social service needs.

Trauma- Informed Approaches

Facilitate the Trauma-Informed Approaches Committee on strategies that improve BPL structures and supports to serve vulnerable patrons and to support staff in this work.

Thank you!

Questions?

Taylor Morris
tmorris@bpl.org

Manager of Social Work, BPL

Anna Fahey-Flynn
afaheyflynn@bpl.org

Manager of the Central Library, BPL

REVOLUTION!
250 YEARS OF ART+
ACTIVISM IN BOSTON

75,000+

VISITORS

to date (Exhibition runs through April 21)

1,500+

SURVEY RESPONSES

sharing their experience

VISITOR VOICES

Boston Globe: “The most exciting and extensive semiquincentennial show.”

“

Powerful, moving,
and inspiring.

“

Thought provoking. An inspiration
and balm during this era of
political distress.

“

I love the way the exhibit is
mounted — freedom is a work in
progress.



“

It moved me so much. I want to be
a mover and shaker in the world —
this showed me I can.

“

The exhibition reminded me that
we are a nation of constant protest
— trying to make ourselves a
better country.

Made possible by the Irene Haney Creative Enrichment Fund through the BPL Fund

Declarations PRINTING A NEW NATION

OPENS

Saturday, April 11, 2026

CLOSES

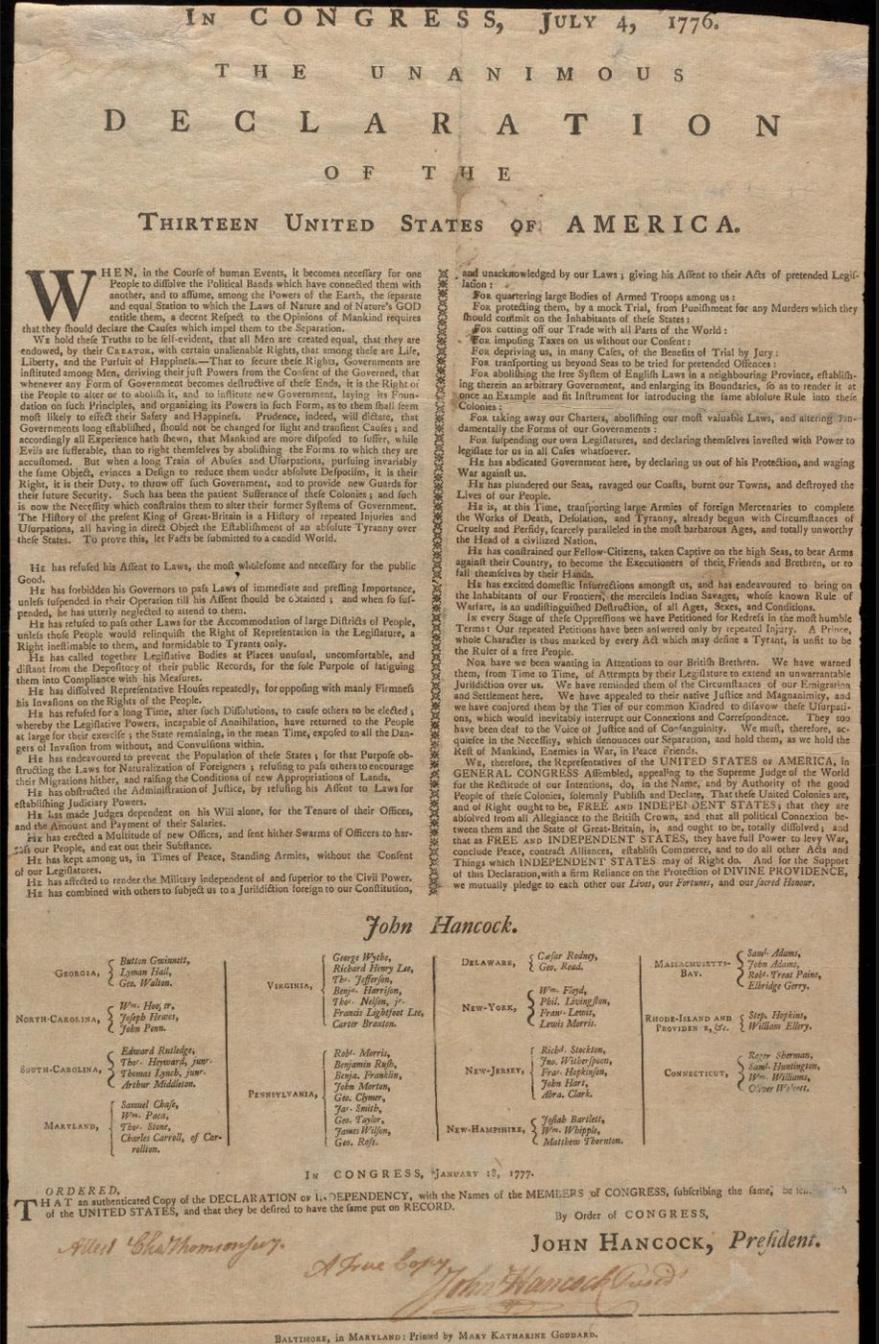
Sunday, September 13, 2026

LOCATION

Leventhal Center Gallery, McKim Building

BPL's eight rare printings of the Declaration of Independence will be displayed together with rare maps, early printings, books, and other visual materials—inviting visitors into the moment when American independence was still taking shape.

co-presented by the Boston Public Library & Leventhal Map & Education Center



FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

**BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**



Evelyn Arana, Committee Chair

Emily Tokarczyk, Chief Financial Officer

FY27 City Operating Budget

FY27 Budget Submission

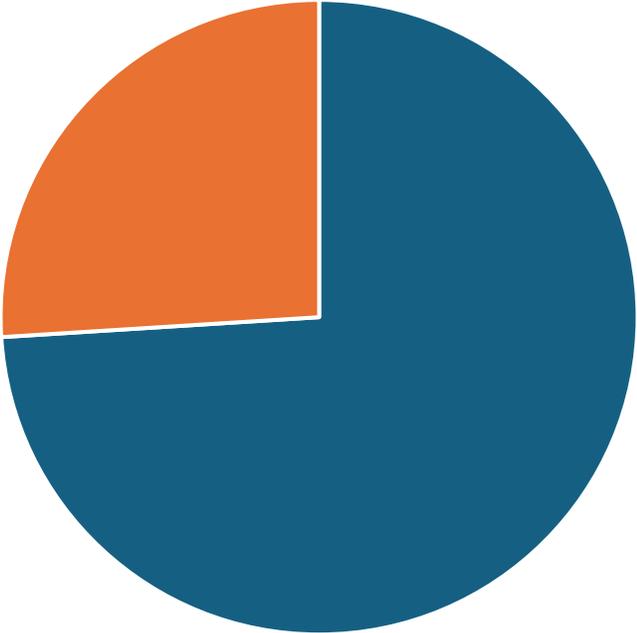
- All City departments to outline a **2% reduction**
- BPL FY27 Maintenance Budget: \$52,247,650
- 2% Reduction Total: \$49,755,511

	FY26 appropriated	FY27 submission
City Operating	\$50,770,930	\$50,770,930

FY27 City Operating Budget

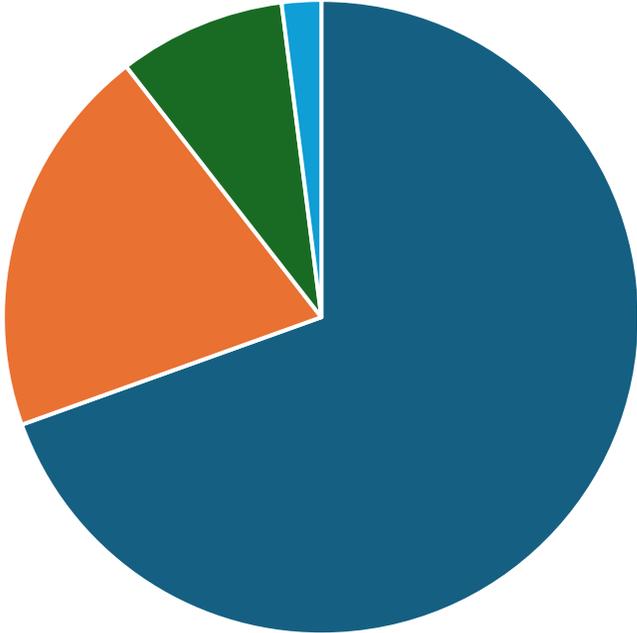
*Breakdown of BPL's Annual Operating Budget:
(based on FY25 Actuals)*

FY25 Annual Operating Budget



■ City Budget 74% ■ External Funding 26%

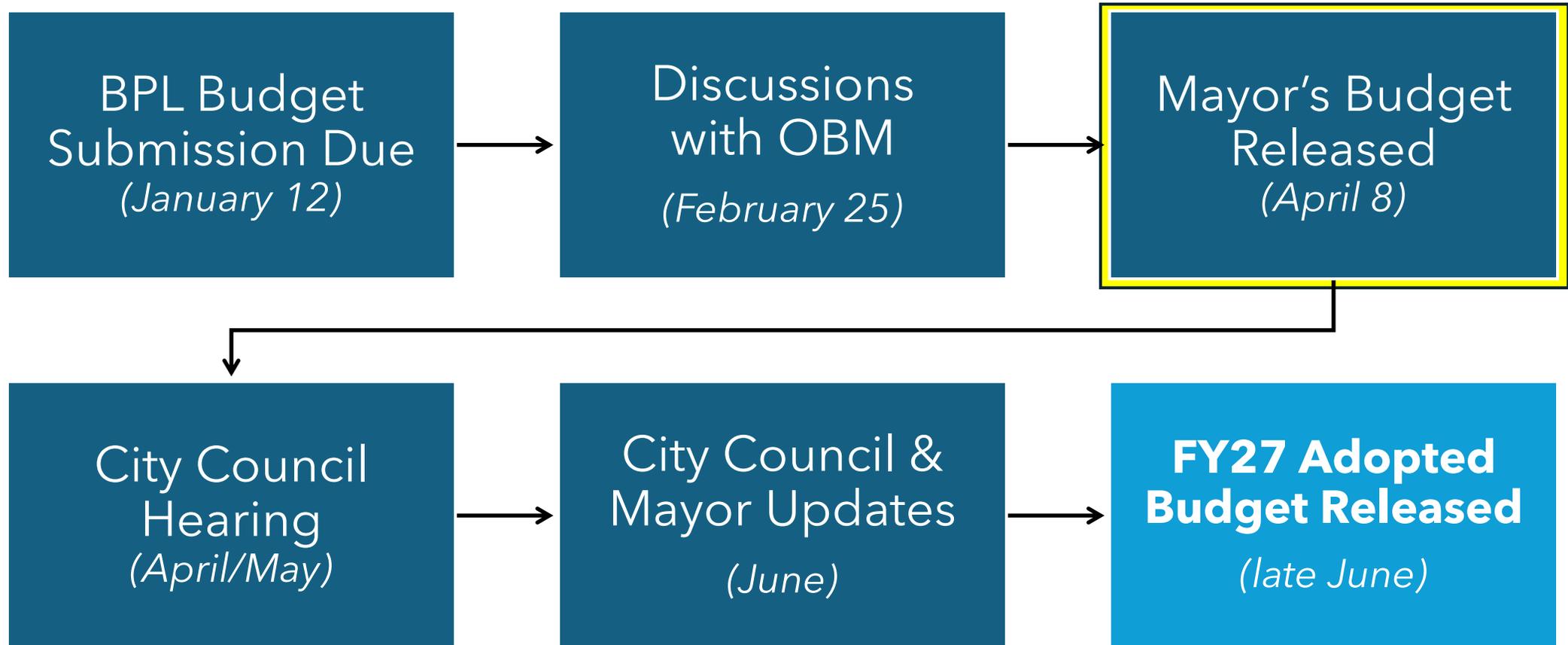
FY25 City Funding



■ Personnel 69.5% ■ Contracts/Utilities 20% ■ Materials 8.5% ■ Other 2%

FY27 City Operating Budget

Anticipated Timeline



Vote for Open AI Pilot Program Gift

Jessica Chapel, Chief of Digital & Online Services

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston. acting pursuant to their authority under Section 2 of Chapter 114 of the Acts of 1878, as amended, hereby accept a gift of One Hundred Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$100,000) from OpenAI Opco, LLC (“OpenAI”) of 1455 3rd St, San Francisco, CA 94158 to support digitization projects by the Boston Public Library.”

Proposed 2026-2027 Board of Trustees Schedule

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston vote to accept the schedule of meetings for 2026-2027 as presented below, noting that these meetings are subject to change (see website for details).

Full Board:

- **Tuesday, September 29, 2026, 8:30am-10:30am, Central Library**
- **Tuesday, December 1, 2026, 3:00pm-5pm, Codman Square Branch**
- **Tuesday, January 19, 2027, 3:00pm-5:00pm, Adams Street Branch**
- **Tuesday, March 16, 2027, 8:30am-10:30am, Central, Rabb Hall**
- **Tuesday, May 18, 2027, 8:30am-11:00am, Annual Meeting, Central Library**

Executive Committee:

- **Tuesday, February 2, 2027, 8:30-9:30am (via Zoom only)**
- **Tuesday, June 8, 2027, 8:30-9:30am (via Zoom only)”**

NEW BUSINESS & PUBLIC COMMENT

*Participants will be called by the Clerk in the order they were received and allowed up to two minutes to speak.
All comments or questions given at this time will be documented and/or answered accordingly at a later time.
(Comments left in the Zoom chat will not be acknowledged)*

Vote for Executive Session

Dr. Ray Liu, Chair

**The purpose is to conduct litigation strategy if an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the body's position, as declared by the chair; under exemption #2 of MA Open Meeting Law.*

**Executive Session will be held at the conclusion of the public meeting. The Board of Trustees will not reconvene in a public session.*

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve to enter into Executive Session for the purpose to discuss litigation strategy under Exemption #2 of MA Open Meeting Law.”



ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting:

**Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at 8:30am
ANNUAL MEETING, Central Library**

*See website for details; subject to change